

Lapham Woods Cleared For Growth

By MORAG MACLACHLAN

For the next several weeks trees in the Lapham Woods will be toppling.

The woods, which are across from the Town Hall, are owned by the Rural and Historical Society. They are being harvested because the dense-

ness is depriving the trees of the sunlight and nutrients needed to grow.

The process involves cutting down trees in certain congested areas of the forest to allow room for other trees. "There is no regeneration, and the trees are beginning to rot and die. Trees

are also becoming sterile, which is preventing the wildlife from getting food," said Conservation Administrator Joe Grady.

The idea is that this new land management technique will improve timber and food

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for wildlife by allowing the sun to reach the forest floor, said Grady. The soil that is then exposed due to the clearing of the trees will allow seeds that fall from the healthy trees to cultivate and grow. In five to ten years, the forest will have a new under growth of younger, healthy trees.

Because so many people have inquired at the town hall about the loss of trees in Lapham Woods, Grady appeared before the Board of Selectmen on Monday night. Grady explained that the trees are being harvested by a licensed timber harvester to preserve the beauty and health of the forest.

Duxbury's woods are no stranger to the harvesting process. "The idea of the project comes after the success of a similar practice that took place on the other side of Depot Street two years ago," said Peter Buttkus, tree warden and manager of building grounds.

Two years ago, the society's Lands Committee began a project of clearing the woods to improve the situation of regrowth on the northeast portion of the lot. After its success, they decided to try the same technique on the southwest side.

Forester Phil Benjamin, who has worked for both the Town Conservation and Open

Space Committees, was the consultant brought on to the scene. He guided the operation for the northeast side. Benjamin drew up the harvesting plan for the 23-acre area, which had to be approved by the county forester and the state before it was put into action.

Benjamin developed recommendations for the woods based on current conditions and growth. He also laid out the primary access road to clear the trees away and measured, selected, and marked the trees to be cleared.

The Gurney Norton Landclearing and Logging Company was commissioned to do the job of cutting and clearing the trees for phase two of the Lapham Woods Forestry Project.

According to Gurney and

Norton, the trees that are cut will be used to make wood chips, paper pulp, lumber, and firewood. The trees that are left will hopefully drop seeds, which will then flourish into a new, healthy forest. "We are trying to enhance the vigor and health of the forest," said Benjamin. "Like every good garden, a forest needs to be trimmed every now and then."

According to Don Muirhead, chairman of the DR&HS lands committee, the Lapham Woods were originally known as Lapham Lot. The majority of the property was purchased by the Rural and Historical Society between 1923 and 1931. Two smaller pieces of land were added in 1946 and the total cost of Lapham Lot was \$2300.



These hardwood and white pine trees are rotting because of a lack of sunlight and nutrients.